



Houthi Attack and Destroyed Fighter: Italy Relocates Military in the Gulf

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ROME – An emergency meeting was held in the afternoon at Palazzo Chigi, attended by Defense Minister **Guido Crosetto** and the Undersecretary to the Presidency of the Council with responsibility for Republic Security, **Alfredo Mantovano**, together with **the heads of the armed forces and intelligence**. The meeting was an opportunity to share an update on military and intelligence aspects relating to the main areas of global crisis.

Remodulation and the Saudi Arabia dossier

At the center of the decisions is the latest report prepared by the Defense leadership — requested by Crosetto also in light of the **attack on the Saudi base at Ta'if with the destruction of an Italian fighter jet**. In light of the **escalation of Houthi attacks**, the primary objective is the security of the contingents. The most likely hypothesis emerging from the summit is **"redeployment of military personnel" to safer territories**, considered more probable than an outright reduction of the contingent.

The movements could take place within Saudi territory itself, protecting the **Arabia Task Force** active at the *King Fahd* hub, but Italian commitment also involves **United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain** (with approximately one hundred units of the Cerberus land task force). The focus is on the defense systems deployed: from **Eurofighter jets** (three of which remain operational) to the radar aircraft **Gulfstream CAEW**, to the **Samp-T** missile system with the *Kronos* radar and the *Skynex* weapon systems.

The Red Sea issue and the Aspides mission

Beyond the mainland, what needs to be protected is the **Red Sea** and the safe passage of Italian merchant ships. During the meeting, the situation of the *Bab el-Mandeb* Strait was addressed, in light of the statements by the EU High Representative for Foreign Policy, **Kaja Kallas**, on the **strengthening of the Aspides mission**.

The hope is that other countries will participate with their own naval assets in escort or aerial surveillance operations; alternatively, **Italy is ready to provide additional contributions** — in addition to the frigate *Bergamini* already deployed together with the Greek one — provided there is **financial support from the various Member States** proportional to the effort made.